

First Unitarian Church of Des Moines

Board of Trustees Minutes | Thursday, August 17, 2023 at 6:00 PM
Stonewall Conference Room | Virtual Access via Zoom

Board Members: Kevin Boeckholt, Jeremy Guenther, Walter Pearson, and Natalie Mason

Staff: Alice Stewart

Congregants: Dave Witke, Barb Martin, Bruce Martin, Harvey Harrison, Ann Mowry, Al Powers, Sue Hueber, Gene McCracken, Mary Ellen Miller

The meeting was called to order by Board President Kevin Boekholdt. The chalice was presented. Jeremy Guenther provided a reading.

Note: Per by-laws 5 board members are required for a quorum, so no votes were taken at this meeting.

Timekeeper & Process Observer: Kevin Boeckholt

Check-in: Goals for this board year

Kevin: Organizationally to be channeling things to appropriate committees and make sure committees, staff, congregation are empowered to make decisions

Walt: Provide support to the younger members of the board as a voice of historical perspective

Jeremy: Strengthen ties and challenge self to build/reinforce connections, especially with the committees/folks who are doing work within the church

Natalie: Build connections and absorb as much as possible to gain a better understanding of how this all works

Public Comment:

Harvey Harrison: Voiced concern about the budget, states that the budget is a statement of values of the church and feels that the budget adopted does not accurately reflect the values or resources of the church and asks that the board generate a long range budget plan and reinstate Faith in Action Programs

Barb Martin: Previously the budget had \$1500 to provide music for 21 services/year and Bard did not realize this line item had changed. States has spent entire budget for the year over the Summer and would like to be able to afford to pay professionals as needed.

Gene McCracken: Advised that in Iowa City they publish their minutes in the newsletter and that they submit a list at the end of march in the newsletter indicating who is eligible to vote based on their by-laws, suggests we could do something similar with our new by-law change.

Consent Agenda: Vote not needed for consent agenda

Approval of board minutes

Committee reports received

Interim Minister's Report: N/A

Director of Finance Report: Alice Stewart

Full report is in the board documents packet posted on Relm. Bullet points of note:

- In July the budget was in the black over \$30k.
 - Surplus due to staffing change
- Rentals, coffee donations and misc. receipts were up.
- Expenses were up in COA and OWL training and adult RE curricula onetime expenses.
- Tech and equipment expenses (new router) software renewals for zoom and grammarly.

New Business

Member Bylaw Change

Walt suggests we focus on activities to increase pledge amounts as we are below average for our peer group churches in this respect. Also focus on getting those members who are regularly donating funds to the church but not filling out pledge cards to fill out their pledge card. Will continue to connect with Stewardship team on these efforts

Governance Retreat

Targeting 8/31 but pending confirmation on that date.

Cleaner Update

We do not have a cleaner at this time. Cleaner we were looking at could not agree to a short term contract. Alice has provided Crystal the info and advised they would support in any way they could. Sue Huber volunteered to work with Crystal to coordinate volunteers

Community Minister Covenant

Rev. Garmon suggested at the last meeting that his spouse LoraKim become attached to First Unitarian as a Community Minister. A sample of her covenant with a prior church

was included in the board meeting packet available on Relm. The board discussed the covenant example and would like additional detail on what (if any) financial arrangement exists and may look for additional policies/covenant examples from UUA.

Financial Oversight Committee Update

Jeremy attended the FOC meeting where Harvey Harrison and Barb Royal presented an alternate budget. The consensus at the FOC meeting is that there is no material information that indicates the data used to create the current budget is wrong, therefore the budget that was adopted at the annual meeting will stand. Jeremy stated that no one likes this budget or feels it reflects the values of the church, but it reflects the reality of our forecasted income.

Kevin suggested the formation of a working group to tackle the issue of funding desired programs.

Faith in Action

Sue Huber spoke on behalf of Faith in Action Committee and advised they will post in the intercom and order of service a link to donate directly to the organization. States there is a risk of losing online basket donations to the specific agency donations. Board acknowledged this risk. Faith in Action Committee also asked that it be clarified in the order of service/offering section of the service that the basket is no longer divided between Faith in Action partners and social justice programs in the church, per budget adopted at annual meeting it now goes all to the operating fund of the church.

The board acknowledged that although the operating fund of the church does fund social justice programs, it is important to clarify the change for the congregation

Kevin will communicate this to the celebrant team to update order of service and what is said in the service starting 9/3 and also review any wording on the website or push pay site.

Announcements

- Kevin has email from UUA about Monday night calls once monthly for leaders within the church with our Rep from the UUA.
- Our current child care coordinator Faithyna Leonard (Faith) has accepted the role of Communications and building rentals coordinator in addition to her current duties.
- Next Board Meeting: Thursday, September 21st 6:00 PM
- Coffee with the Board: Sunday, September 3rd 8:30 AM in the Stonewall Conference Room

Meeting was adjourned by Kevin Boeckholdt. The chalice was extinguished and Jeremy Guenther shared a reading.

Submitted by Natalie Mason, acting as Secretary in Kathryn Sutton's absence.

